growers and private parties. Besides, STC has also been permitted to export certain quantities of rubber held by them.

US warned India on Provident Protection in Patents Area

1861. SHRI BEKAL UTSAHI:

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether as reported in *National Herald* of 12th December, 1991 US has warned India to provide a measure of product protection in patents area of pharmaceuticals by 26th February, 1992 to avert retaliatory action;

(b) if so, what specific nature and extent of product protection was desired by US; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) Government has noted the news item which appeared in *National Herald* of 12th December, 1991. The Government has not received such a warning from the United States. However, the United States Trade Representative had designated India as a priority country and initiated investigation on 26th May, 1991 under Special 301 provisions of its trade legislation on grounds of perceived inadequacy in the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights. In particular, in the area of patents, the United States has raised the issue of scope of patentability, uniform duration of term of patents and limitations on the conditions for grant of compulsory licences. Government has drawn the attention of the United States to the fact that this issue is the subject of multilateral trade negotiations in the Uruguay Round which have yet to be concluded.

Visit of India's Trade Delegations to Republics in CIS

1862. SHRI BEKAL UTSAHI:

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether an Offical delegation was sent to Russia, recently to hold talks with individual Republics in the Commonwealth of Independent States on various issues relating to trade and commerce; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the talks with each Republic including the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) An official level delegation led by the Foreign Secretary visited Moscow in January, 1992. The delegation held discussions with the Russian Government on different bilateral issues including economic cooperation and trade relations. As a follow-up to this visit, a Russian delegation visited India in the third week of February, 1992. During this visit an Agreement on Trade and Economic cooperation was initialled and is expected to be signed in the near future. A bilateral Trade Protocol for 1992 was also concluded during this visit. Seperately Trade Agreements with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have also been concluded. Discussions have also been held with the Republics of Ukraine, Belarus, Azerbaijan and Kirghizstan.

Import of Rubber by Business Houses

1863. SHRI M. A. BABY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that Indian business houses import rubber;

(b) if so, what is the quantity and break-up of rubber imported during the last six months by the business houses;

(c) whether Government of Kerala has requested the Centre to stop all sorts of imports of rubber; and

(d) if so, what steps have been taken by Government in this regard?